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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8942

INFO RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 2885

RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA IMMEDIATE 1075

RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA IMMEDIATE 9091

RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA IMMEDIATE 3434

RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE IMMEDIATE 4863

RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO IMMEDIATE 1644

RUCPDC/NOAA NMFS WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS TOKYO 003197

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR D, G AND OES/OA - MHAYES/LPHELPS AND EAP/J
USDOC FOR NOAA/NMFS - CMCCARTY AND RWULFF

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EFIS SENV PREL IWC JA

SUBJECT: WHALING: JAPAN REJECTS PROPOSAL TO CURTAIL LETHAL
RESEARCH WHALING

REF: SECSTATE 116833

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Japan rejects Australia's proposal that it curtail its lethal research whaling activity this year in exchange for Australia's consideration of Japan's coastal whaling proposal, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF) Vice Minister Murakami told the DCM November 18. However, Murakami said Japan wants to continue its dialogue with Australia on whaling. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Economic Affairs Bureau Deputy Director General Takase gave a similar response in a meeting with EMIN November 12. Takase also said a "substantial change" in Japan's research whaling was possible as part of a package negotiated within the International Whaling Commission (IWC).
End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Using points in ref. the DCM asked MAFF Vice Minister for International Affairs Hidenori Murakami to consider Australia's proposal for Japan to curtail its lethal research whaling in the Southern Ocean during the 2008/9 season in exchange for Australia's consideration of Japan's coastal whaling proposal, during a November 18 meeting. Murakami said the proposal was not acceptable, but Japan wants to continue its dialogue with Australia on whaling. He expressed appreciation for IWC Chairman and U.S. Whaling Commissioner Dr. William Hogarth's initiative to break the stalemate within the IWC and said Japan would continue to support his efforts in the IWC small-working group process.

¶3. (SBU) Ministry of Foreign Affairs Economic Affairs Bureau Deputy Director General Yasuo Takase gave a similar response in a meeting with EMIN November 12. He said Australian Special Envoy Sandy Holloway visited Japan twice in October and suggested Japan decrease the number of whales taken in its research whaling program in exchange for Australian "consideration" of Japan's small-type coastal whaling program. Unfortunately, Takase said "consideration" by Australia was not sufficient and Japan would need more commitment from Australia.

¶4. (SBU) Takase said Japan will reach a conclusion that will mean a "substantial change" in the level of its research whaling. However, he said it would be done within the IWC as part of a package that included concessions from the anti-whaling countries. He said the anti-whaling countries had not yet reciprocated for Japan's continued suspension of the harvest of humpback whales. It would therefore be difficult for Japan to decide unilaterally to reduce the quota for its research whaling. Nevertheless, he did say the current quota of 850 minke and 50 fin whales for Japan's

Antarctic research whaling was a ceiling, and the harvest during the upcoming season could be below that number depending on the conditions of the hunt and scientific advice.

SCHIEFFER